

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 were pending in the subject application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 4 have been amended to clarify the claimed subject matter, and claims 2 and 3 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Support for the claim amendments can be found in the application as originally filed, for example, at page 9, lines 17-35. Further support for the claim amendments can be found, inter alia, in Figs. 3 and 4 as originally filed.

Applicant maintains that no new matter is presented by this amendment. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment be entered. Claims 1 and 4 would be pending upon entry of this amendment.

Objection To The Specification

On page 2 of the September 10, 2008 Office Action, the specification was objected to as having informalities.

In response, the specification (and abstract) has been amended to address the formal issues raised in the Office Action.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

On page 3 of the September 10, 2008 Office Action, claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

In response, the claims have been amended to address the formal

issues raised in the Office Action.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

On page 3 of the September 10, 2008 Office Action, claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as purportedly anticipated by Fukushima (JP 4-133878).

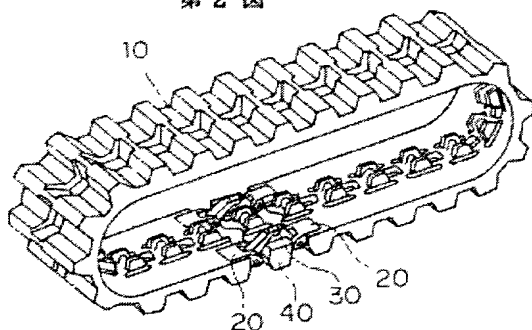
The Examiner stated that Fukushima discloses a separable rubber track comprising a plurality of segments (figure 6) each comprising a plurality of steel cores 12 for engaging a sprocket, a pair of connection cores 20 disposed at the ends of the segments and connected to the steel cores (at least through rubber track), and coupling members comprising a top 33 and a bottom 35. The Examiner further stated that the connecting cores include pins 23 rotatably comprising a top 33 and a bottom 35. The Examiner also stated that the connecting cores include pins 23 rotatably received by the coupling members in grooves 32 to connect the ends of adjacent segments. The Examiner stated that the coupling members 33, 35 are fastened together using bolts 38.

Applicant submits that the present application is allowable over the cited art, for at least the reason that the cited art does not disclose or suggest the aspects of the present application that (a) each connection core includes leading ends and a pair of connection pins provided on the leading ends such that the coupling members are coupled with the connection cores by the connection pins to rotatably connect adjacent track units to each other, and (b) the coupling members are divided into a top coupling member and a bottom coupling member, and the top coupling member and the bottom coupling member form connection grooves, into which the connection pins are rotatably inserted,

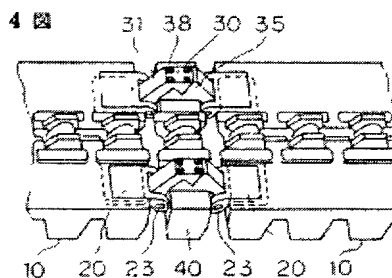
and the top and bottom coupling members of the coupling members are fastened to each other by fastening means.

Fukushima, as understood by applicant, proposes a rubber crawler belt, as shown in figures 2-5 thereof (reproduced below), for a crawler. In the device proposed in Fukushima, shaft supports 20 having forked bosses 22 with drilled shaft holes 21 are welded to core metals 12 on both ends of one connection of rubber crawler belt 10, and a split type member 31 having a tooth 33 with a shaft 23 is jointed between the forked bosses 22 of the shaft support 20. The other split type member 35 constituting connecting metal fittings 30 together with the split type member 31 is welded to the core metal 12, vulcanized and molded in one body with a lug 41 out of rubber, to constitute a connecting crawler plate 40. The teeth 33, 36 of the split type members 31, 35 are engaged with each other, the members 31, 35 are tightened with bolts 38, and hence the crawler belt is connected in a ringlike shape.

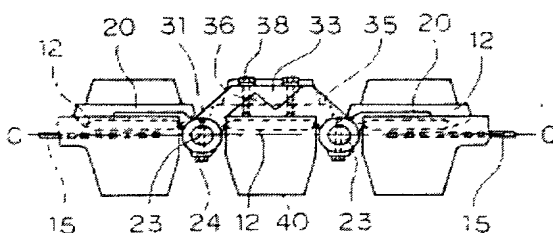
第 2 図



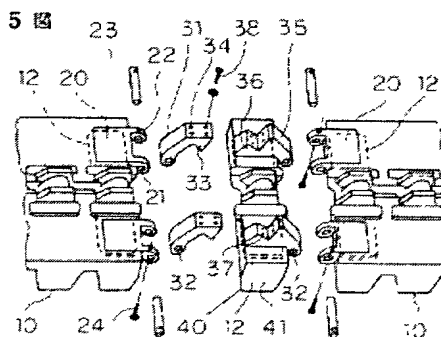
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第 3 図

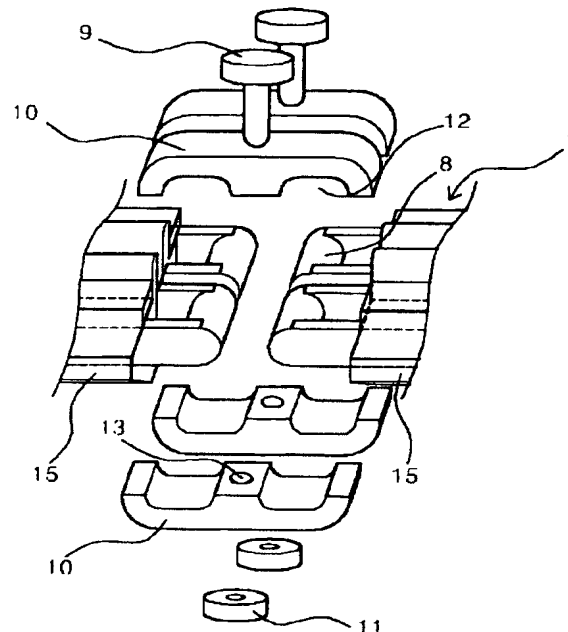


第 5 図



However, in Fukushima, the rubber crawler belt 10 is integrally connected as a whole, and thus, the connecting metal fittings 30 for splitting or connecting the belt are only one member. And, the connecting metal fittings 30 are connected by teeth 33, 36 of split type members 31, 35 respectively, to assembly to the upper side of the connecting crawler plate 40 with bolts 38. Accordingly, if the rubber crawler belt 10 is partially broken, it is necessary to exchange the rubber crawler belt 10 as a whole. Such constitution has the disadvantage that it is costly to repair the belt, and further, there are problems that the number of components is increased and the assembability is deteriorated.

On the contrary, the subject invention relates to a separable rubber track having the above-mentioned aspects (a) and (b). An example including such aspects is shown in Fig. 4 (reproduced below) of the application.



In the example shown in Fig. 4 of the application, the rubber track is divided into a plurality of track units 15. Coupling members 10 are connected to connection cores 1 formed on both ends of each track unit 15 [for example, above-mentioned aspect (a) of the application] to form an integrated endless track. Accordingly, even if any one of track units 15 is broken, it is sufficient to exchange only the broken track unit. With such constitution, expenses for the maintenance and repair of the tank can be reduced markedly.

In addition, in the example shown in Fig. 4 of the application, the coupling members 10 are divided into top and bottom parts and the connection grooves 12 of the coupling members 10 are formed, and thus, the pair of top and bottom coupling members 10 are fastened to each other by the bolts 9 and the nuts 11 [for example, fastening means in above-mentioned aspect (b) of the application]. Such aspect of the present application has the advantage that the number of components for fastening the rubber track is not only reduced but also the assemblability is improved.

Fukushima proposes that, as shown in Figs. 3 to 5 thereof, two different split type members 31, 35 are coupled with a connecting crawler plate 40 by bolts 38 while being engaged with teeth 33, 36 formed on the upper side thereof, thereby supporting only the load of the upper portion of the rubber crawler belt 10. However, such constitution does not enable the lower portion of the rubber crawler belt 10 to be supported evenly and fully.

In contrast, in the example of the above-mentioned aspects shown in Figs. 3 and 4 of the present application, the connection grooves 12 of the coupling members 10 provided with upper and lower sides respectively are assembled together while enclosing connection pins 8 of track units 15 in the upper and lower sides

thereof simultaneously [for example, above-mentioned aspect (b) of the application], thereby supporting evenly and fully the load applied to both sides of the track units 15. Accordingly, it is submitted that the durability of the track units in the above-mentioned aspects of the present application is superior to that of the rubber crawler belt 10 of Fukushima.

Moreover, due to the constitution of Fukushima, as described above, it supports the load of the rubber crawler belt 10 by providing with two split type members 31, 35 and the connecting crawler plate 40 fixing the members 31, 35 separately.

In contrast, in the above-mentioned example of the above-mentioned aspects of the subject invention, only two coupling members 10 are provided to support the load of the track units 15, thereby reducing the number of parts and improving the assemblability.

Applicant submits that the cited art, even when considered along with common sense and common knowledge to one skilled in the art, does not render unpatentable the above-mentioned aspects of the present application.

Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom are patentable over the cited art.

In view of the remarks hereinabove, Applicant maintains that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant earnestly solicits the allowance of the application.

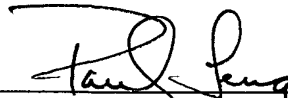
If a telephone interview would be of assistance in advancing prosecution of the subject application, Applicant's undersigned attorneys invite the Examiner to telephone them at the telephone

number provided below.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition.

No fee is deemed necessary in connection with the filing of this Amendment. However, if any fees are required, authorization is hereby given to charge the amount of any such fee to Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

Respectfully submitted,



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